

ASSEMBLYMEMBER LLOYD LEVINE

DISTRICT 40

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Fallen Soldier Lives on Through His Mother's Work

Asm. Levine honors Jane Bright's fight for troops

Sacramento, CA- Jane Bright, co-founder of the Evan Ashcraft Memorial was named by Assemblymember Lloyd Levine (D-Van Nuys) as "Assembly District 40 Woman of the Year" during Monday's Assembly floor session. Jane's son, Sgt. Evan Ashcraft, died tragically at the age of 24 when his convoy was attacked by grenades and rocket launchers from Iraqi troops.

"Being named Women of the Year was a complete surprise," said Jane Bright of West Hills. "The foundation started as a place to put my energy in a positive way. But now I realize we need to make sure the war doesn't continue because your child could end up where mine is."

Sgt. Evan Ashcraft was inducted into the U.S. Army in January of 2000 at age 20. He was a true hero, earning the Purple Heart for saving the lives of two soldiers attacked by enemy fire just months before he himself sustained mortal wounds in a similar situation.

"Over 1500 Americans have died in Iraq," said Levine. "Stories like the Brights' shed light on the true face of war—not only in demonstrating the suffering that war causes, but also the courage that the Bright family has in speaking up for up for troops and families around the country."

Jane and her husband Jim founded the Evan Ashcraft Memorial. The Foundation's mission is to provide scholarship funds, medical and psychological treatment, and other necessities to returning Iraqi conflict veterans and their dependents.

"Evan was concerned about the lack of care for veterans and their families," Jane said. "Our foundation goes to the heart of what Evan wanted."

Several groups are working to raise funds for the foundation. Evan's Elementary School in West Hills recently held an "Evan Ashcraft Night" at the local Ruby's and 99's Women's Flight Club of Sun Valley is hosting a similar event. In addition, on Evan's 26th Birthday, May 22nd, the West Hills Post Office will be rededicated in his honor.

"He died alone, no family nearby, no one to hold his hand or pray over him as he left this world," said Jane in a statement given to Congress. "It's too late for my son, but it's not too late for the many tens of thousands still in Iraq. Bring them home now!"

Attached is the full transcript of Jane Bright's testimony to Congress and Evan Ashcraft's obituary. More information can be found at www.evanashcraft.org

Jane Bright's Statement to Congress

September 9, 2003

My son, Sgt. Evan Ashcraft, was killed July 24, 2003 at 2:30 in the morning on a lonely road near Mosul, Iraq. He was 24 years old. He died alone, no family nearby, no one to hold his hand or pray over him as he left this world.

Evan was a gifted student, musician and athlete. He started college courses in mathematics and computer science when he was 13 years old. He played classical piano. He had hopes and dreams. He and his soul mate, Ashley, had big plans. Evan planned to get his college degree after he left the Army. Evan and Ashley had been married 3 years.

Evan was one of the best and the brightest. He was a leader, his team loved him and he them.

The young men and women who are dying in Iraq are our future generation of leaders. They are the future of America. They represent the best that America has to offer. Those who survive Iraq will undoubtedly face years of anguish over what they have witnessed in this immoral war, all in the name of oil. In the meantime we, the American public, sit by, mute, as we watch our young die. We must halt this unconscionable action in Iraq immediately and bring our young people home.

It's too late for my son, but it's not too late for the many tens of thousands still in Iraq. Bring them home now!

Jane Bright

Mother of Sgt Evan Ashcraft, Deceased

Obituary for Evan Ashcraft

Ashcraft, Evan A., 24, Sergeant, U.S. Army, 101st Airborne Division

Husband of Ashley Ashcraft, son of Jane Bright and Asa Ashcraft, brother of Drew Ashcraft, and stepson to Beverly Ashcraft and James Bright, killed in action in Iraq near Mosul on July 24, 2003.

Evan was a beautiful baby born Tuesday, May 22, 1979 at 12:25 in the afternoon. He learned fast and moved quickly. He was a gifted student and a gifted musician. Evan did a lot in his short 24 years. Everything he did, everything he accomplished, he did so to the ultimate. He loved spaghetti-o's, rocky road ice cream, macaroni and cheese, and applesauce. He loved children. He only wore Van's old school shoes. He had character.

He was passionate, in a quiet way. He was great at everything he attempted, he gave 150% to everything he endeavored. He was an extraordinary man. Evan served his country with unqualified honor, he was a consummate soldier and found meaning in life through his will to excel.

Evan loved his family without reservation, was a dedicated friend and soldier. His intelligence was startling and he walked with the assurance of a man twice his age.

Evan found purpose and direction with his soul mate Ashley. He formed an eternal bond with his younger brother, Drew, and loved him with all his heart. He found closeness and support in his loving parents. He was a wellspring of love.

Evan will always be with us in spirit. He still lives, and will continue to live, in all of us. We love you, you are a hero, you are the best.